



Media Contact:

Greg Risling
Public Information Officer
grisling@da.lacounty.gov
213-974-3525
Twitter: @LADAOoffice

July 23, 2014

Orange County Financial Consultant Sentenced to 15 Years in Prison for Teacher's Murder

An Orange County financial consultant was sentenced today to 15 years in state prison for a complex financial scheme that included the murder of a Los Angeles school teacher, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Daniel Gilbert Becerril II, 37, was sentenced by Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Sam Ohta.

Last week, Becerril pleaded no contest to one count of voluntary manslaughter, five theft counts and one count of money laundering.

Deputy District Attorney Hilda Weintraub and Robert Knowles of the White Collar Crime Division prosecuted the case.

Becerril conducted a complex theft and money laundering scheme that defrauded both Alexander Merman, a 35-year-old elementary school teacher, and a second victim, prosecutors said.

Becerril stole about \$315,000 in inherited annuity funds from Merman after the victim had loaned him \$250,000 to aid Becerril's ailing business. Becerril then transferred the stolen funds among several bank accounts in order to hide the money, according to prosecutors.

On March 18, 2008, Becerril fatally stabbed Merman in his Santa Monica apartment, the prosecutor added. There was no forensic evidence left at the murder scene; the Huntington Beach resident was linked to the murder by cell phone evidence and voluminous financial documents.

The second victim was defrauded out of approximately \$127,000 through a real estate scam.

The case was investigated by the Santa Monica Police Department.

#

About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.